

Secrets of Parenting Podcasts

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Hello, This is Karen DeBord and today we will be talking about Secrets of Parenting. I today's segment, I want to talk about the Five Languages of Love. This is based on the work of Gary Chapman who wrote a book by this title. It has value for you as a parent as well as for you as a partner or mate. Here is how it goes—and the point is to determine what language your child or mate prefers to be shown love.

Basically there are five ways we all like to feel love. And we need to pay attention to the language we most are drawn to as well as that of our children. Then we need to talk to them in a language they understand. The easy way to remember them is by the three: tell me, touch me, show me. But “show me” has 3 parts. Show me may be spending quality time together, acts of service or giving gifts. Let's talk about each one a little more.

Touch me

For people who like to be touched, a caring hug can be very important. Babies love to be held close—they thrive on hours of it. Small children love to snuggle—they draw a feeling of safety from closeness with trusted adults. Most children like to be hugged—especially when they are lonely. Even in adulthood, some people thrive on hugs from family and friends.

People vary in how much they like to be hugged. Notice your child's reaction. Does she lean into hugs or fight them? Would he rather push and shove as a way of being in touch? When we pay attention to our children, we discover how much and what way they like to be hugged.

Sometimes a child likes to be hugged more than a parent likes to hug. The parent can be glad that the child wants to connect. And the parent can prepare for hug time. If, for example, a daughter likes to hang on her mother for several minutes after school, rather than feel frustrated and resentful, the mother can prepare mentally to set aside 5, 10, or 15 minutes of time after school for hugging her daughter.

Tell me

For people who like to be told they are loved, hearing certain words regularly is very important. It is not enough that you cook for them, work for them, or hug them. They want to hear the words. There are many words for telling love like, “You are a great kid, I love spending time with you.”

For some people, being told they are loved is uncomfortable. They don't know what to say or how to react. They may still want to be told — but perhaps in a different way. Telling can be done in many ways. Some children just want to hear you express your

love in words. Others may prefer a note. Some may like love surprise notes. Once in a while you might surprise them with a special sign in their bedroom. Especially as they get older, some children may prefer a letter in which you tell about good times and cherished memories you have shared. You may tell them what you remember about her birth or his childhood. You may tell about your pride and joy as she grew.

Show me

For people who like to be shown love, actions speak louder than words. Rather than be told about your love, they want to see it. This applies with adults and with children. One way to show is spending *quality time* together. For example, a boy may be glad that his father promises to take him fishing. Promises will stop being helpful if the father does not actually take his son fishing. An ounce of action may be worth a pound of promise. For example, if you promise a trip to the mall on Saturday, follow-through and go to the mall with your child.

Or a child may prefer that the parent simply attends events (concerts, sporting events), plays basketball with them or helps with a school project.

Consider making appointments to do things with your children. When children are young, you might plan some small event with them every day. "This evening after dinner let's walk over to the park and swing on the swings." As children get older they may want to go biking together, have us come to one of their ball games, or take them out one day each week. Make dates with them to do the fun things they enjoy. There is hardly a better way to show children that you care about them than taking time to be with them.

Another way that showing love is revealed as love is with *gifts*- and the gifts may be small- picking flowers from the yard, making a card, or remembering a birthday.

Then last in the show me category is *acts of service*. If I am coming home from work and someone has folded the clothes from the dryer and started dinner- I truly feel loved if I am an acts of service type. Remember you may like to receive love in a different way than others so not only must you identify each person's love type you will hope they can determine yours as well!

When our children know we are available for them, they may actually demand less attention. When we always seem anxious to get away, they may feel that they have to pursue us. When we respond gladly and readily to their needs, they learn to feel safe and strong. Some school age children may want to sit for a while after school or in the evening and hug. Set aside time. Talk if the child likes to talk. If they don't want to talk, just relax together. The best way to show a child love is the way the child likes to receive love.

This is Karen DeBord with North Carolina Cooperative Extension